



# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Volume 23 Issue 4 | July/August 2016

ALL SEASONS  
WILD BIRD  
STORE

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS:

## *Dashing Beauties*

+ **Plants for Pollinators**  
*Late Summer Checklist*



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#### BLOOMINGTON

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#### WAYZATA & WILD BIRD DELIVERS

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#### WILDBIRDSTORE.COM

*Bird's-Eye View* is published to share the joy of backyard birds with All Seasons Wild Bird Store's customers and friends.

#### BACKYARD HABITAT

## *Plants for Pollinators*

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

We've all heard about the declining populations of our bees and butterflies. Many of North America's more than 4,000 species of bees are in decline. Butterflies are losing habitat at an alarming rate. We can help by planting a pollinator-friendly garden in our own backyard. You don't need a lot of space to start a pollinator garden. Planting a few pots of flowers can attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.



### **Why We Need Pollinators**

Animals pollinate 75% of the 1,300 types of plants grown worldwide for food, beverages, medicines and spices. Pollinators are critical to the reproduction of up to 90% of the world's flowering plants.

### **Life Essentials**

Like people, our pollinator friends need the basics of life: food, water, and shelter. To a pollinator that means flower nectar and pollen, a water supply, and adequate shelter to hide from predators and to get out of the elements. Butterflies like to gather at shallow pools, mud puddles or

birdbaths, where they gracefully sip the water. An ideal watering hole for a bee is a shallow puddle, like those found in flat rocks.



▲ Plant flowers in large clumps

### **Selecting Plants for Pollinators**

Choose a variety of flower colors and shapes that bloom at different times of the year to provide nectar and pollen sources throughout the growing season to a variety of pollinators. The greater diversity you offer, the more pollinators you will attract. Plant flowers in larger clumps rather than just planting single plants.

### **Tip: The Importance of Color and Shape**

Flower colors can be important. For instance, we know that hummingbirds are attracted to red, fuchsia and purple. Studies have shown that butterflies are attracted to red, orange and yellow.

*Continued on page 4 >*



## Thanks for Helping us Celebrate!



**WOW!** Thank you to all who came out and celebrated with us during our 25th Anniversary Sale in May. It was a super busy and really fun month for all of us here.

There must be some very happy birds around the Twin Cities and beyond as they have oodles of new feeders and tons—yes, literally tons—of new seed to eat: you hauled away **about 24 TONS of Joe's Mix**. Just to give you an example, that's 48,000 pounds!

We're proud of our 25-year accomplishment and received many well wishes from so many of you. We owe you a truly heartfelt thank you for all of it. Without you, our generous, kind, loyal, bird-loving customers, this wouldn't still be happening.

We also want to acknowledge our amazing staff for sticking with us for so long. We have great folks working here that really care about customer service as well as feeding wild birds. Thank you for all you do.

We're grateful to be an exception in the vastly changing retail world and hope to be around for a long time to come.

*Al and Dave Netten*



*Worry-Free Guarantee!*

We want our customers to have a worry-free experience with every purchase. If you're not completely satisfied with *any item* purchased from our store, simply return it to us for an exchange or refund.

**No worries . . . ever.**



**Join the conversation online!**

Visit our Facebook page to post photos, ask questions and be the first to know about upcoming sales and events.

JUL.  
&  
AUG.

## Late Summer

by Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT

- ☐ **Provide a protein food source for hummingbirds by attracting fruit flies with overripe bananas and cantaloupe.**



- ☐ Use seed compressed into cakes or cylinders to reduce the scattering of seeds by birds, like House Sparrows, sweeping through loose seed with their bills.
- ☐ Keep your garden, patio, and deck clean with out-of-shell sunflowers (to avoid germination) with **Kracker Jax** and **medium chips**.

- ☐ **Help adult birds feed their young by using a dish-style feeder full of mealworms and suet pellets.**



- ☐ Remove old nests and debris between nestings in bluebird boxes.
- ☐ Attract goldfinches gathering cotton fibers for July nest-building with the **Best Nest Builder™**.
- ☐ Offer **Nyjer™** and **Chips** and keep feeders full of fresh seed to attract goldfinches. They feed their young a slurry of seed.
- ☐ Leave grounded fledglings alone. Even if not fully flighted, they do not need human assistance. Adult birds are nearby and will return to feed the young after you leave the area.
- ☐ Schedule **Feed and Fill service** to tend to your feeders while you're on vacation. Call the Wayzata store at (952) 473-4283 to set up your service.

- ☐ Help birds beat the heat by placing a birdbath to your yard.
- ☐ Prevent mosquitoes from making your birdbath a breeding ground by adding a **Water Wiggler™**. This handy gadget moves the water, attracting more birds and preventing mosquitoes from laying eggs in stagnant water.
- ☐ Clean birdbaths with 9 parts water and 1 part bleach, then rinse well. Add Bird Bath Protector to your just-cleaned bath to maintain healthy drinking water.
- ☐ Keep feeders full and fresh into October. Many backyards host more hummingbirds in August and September than any other time of the year.
- ☐ Provide **mealworms, grape jelly, a nectar feeder** and **oranges** to attract orioles. Even if you haven't attracted them in the past, try again now that nesting season is over.

- ☐ **Add mint extract to nectar ports to repel bees from hummingbird and oriole feeders. Also consider hanging nectar and jelly feeders from an ant trap to prevent ants from reaching the feeders.**



- ☐ Attract Blue Jays with **in-shell peanut feeders**. Blue Jays are beneficial because they sound the alarm and alert songbirds to the presence of hawks, cats and other predators.



## Rose-breasted Grosbeaks

## Picture Perfect!

By Minnetonka Manager CAROL CHENAULT



With a brilliant red chevron on its breast, the male Rose-breasted Grosbeak is a show stopper. Enjoy the spectacle while it lasts. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks nest throughout Minnesota, and some yards are fortunate enough to host two broods of young each year. During this time, it's a joy to watch them at our feeders.

**Identification**

Smaller than the American Robin and larger than the House Finch, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are stocky, medium-sized birds of 7-8 inches. They have a broad chest, short neck and medium-length tail. Their large ivory bill is excellent for crushing seeds.

The size and shape of the rosy triangular chevron on the white breast of the male varies considerably and can be used to identify individual birds. The males have a black head, wing linings of a rosy pink and broad white wing bars.

The females are streaked with brown, have white wing bars, orange-yellow wing linings and a large white eyebrow. At first glance they resemble a larger version of a female sparrow or a Red-winged Blackbird female. Juveniles look more like females.



▲ Male and female Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

These birds molt twice a year with a partial molt before spring migration and a complete molt in August. After the August molt the males are not as brilliant in color.

**Song**

Most often heard before seen, the males arrive around the second week of May from Mexico, Central or South America. They begin singing in earnest when females arrive a few days later. Both males and females sing, but the males are louder and more persistent. The song is robin-like only more operatic, with rambling series of loud whistles. They also call to one another with a loud "chink" that sounds like the sole of a basketball shoe on the court.

**Nesting and Behavior**

Nest building begins about a week after grosbeak arrival to breeding territory. Males defend an area of two to three acres. The nest is a flimsy, loose structure taking two to three days to build from twigs and may contain horse, pet or human hair. Found on a fork in the dense foliage of a deciduous or evergreen tree, the nest is most often 10-15 feet above the ground along forest edges, woodlands or urban wooded areas. When the nest is observed from the ground, you can often see the sky through it.

The average clutch size is four, but nests can have three to six eggs. The eggs are oval pale green or bluish green, with irregular brown spots more densely concentrated at the larger end of the egg. The eggs are incubated for 13-14 days by both adults. When the eggs hatch the nestlings remain in the nest for 9-12 days before fledging. A mating pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks can have two broods of young each year.

Unfortunately, they are often unwitting cowbird hosts.

In order to begin building the second nest, the female may leave the young of the first brood while they're still nestlings. The second nest can be as close as 30 feet from the first nest. At the very end of the nesting cycle, the male adult assumes all care for the first brood until they fledge. The young birds will fly a short distance from the nest and call a noisy "too you," begging to be fed. After two to three weeks, the parent birds become more forceful during feeding and may chase the young short distances to break up the family group.

When Rose-breasted Grosbeaks first arrive, you may see several males on seed feeders in your backyard. As with most songbirds, once the females arrive, the males become more territorial. As a result, you may notice fewer grosbeaks in total as male and female pairs feed together. Once the young leave the nest they often accompany the adults to the feeding station. A birdbath is a welcome feature and will give you a chance to see these gorgeous birds while they bathe and preen.

**Attracting**

Because of their stocky size, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks tend to favor tube feeders with U-shaped perches and/or trays attached, fly-through hanging trays and platform feeders. Their bulky bills are designed to open hard-shelled seeds. Some of their favorite foods are black oil sunflower seeds, golden safflower, white safflower and peanuts out of the shell. Additional food items that may entice these birds include fruit, mealworms (to feed their young) and suet pellets. ■

## BACKYARD HABITAT (continued from page 1)

The shape of flowers is also important. Butterflies and bees usually need to land



**FLOWER SHAPE:** Butterflies and bees prefer flat, open flowers. Hummingbirds like tube-like flowers.

before feeding, and because of that they like flat, open flowers. Hummingbirds hover so they like tubular flowers.

### A Word About Native Plants

Always choose native plants whenever possible. These plants have adapted with our climate and environment and our native bees and butterflies have adapted to these plants. Never use pesticides or herbicides of any kind in a pollinator garden. Even organic pesticides can be potentially harmful to pollinators, especially bees. For more

information, please visit our website, WildBirdStore.com, and click on "Bird Habitat Guide" in the left-hand column. ■



▲ *Never use pesticides or herbicides in any kind of pollinator garden*

## BEE QUIZ

Test your bee knowledge with these questions from Marty Anderson, apiarist (beekeeper), retired DNR wildlife specialist and full-time hobby farmer.

**1. Besides plant nectar, bees also collect honeydew.**

- a) True      b) False

**2. Bees will forage up to \_\_\_ mile(s) or more.**

- a) 0.5 miles    b) 1.5 miles    c) 3 miles

**3. What much-loved Minnesota songbird favors bees?**

- a) American Robin    b) Purple Martin  
c) Rose-breasted Grosbeak

**4. From what spring flowering tree do bees first collect nectar?**

- a) oak      b) red maple      c) willow



Answers: 1. a) True: Honeydew is the extra sap excreted by aphids. 2. c) 3 miles 3. b) Purple Martin 4. b) Red Maple, followed by Willow and then Oak

## GREAT IDEAS

### Trays & Platforms Easy Access for All Songbirds



▲ *Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a tray-style feeder*

Adding a tray to a tube-style birdseed feeder makes it cardinal-friendly and provides easier access for Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Mourning Doves. Cardinals prefer to face directly forward toward their food, allowing for greater bilateral vision and better flight defense should a hawk or other predator enter the yard. Using a tray on a tube feeder eliminates waste by capturing falling seed.

### Aspects® BigFoot Tray

A good tray option is the Aspects® 12-inch BigFoot Tray. This clear tray is made



▲ *Aspects® BigFoot Tray.*

of durable polycarbonate. It fits all Aspects Quick-Clean® tubular feeders

and attaches simply and quickly.

### Birds Choice™ Recycled Tray Feeder

This hanging tray is made from durable 98% recycled material and won't fade, crack or split.



▲ *Recycled material won't fade, crack or split*

The mesh bottom allows rain to drain through, keeping the seed, suet pellet

and fruit drier and fresher while avoiding mold and mildew. The S hook on the collapsible steel rods ensure the feeder hangs straight.

### Droll Yankees® Platform Feeder

This clear feeder allows birds to access food from all directions and provides a quick exit if a predator should appear.

The durable, UV-stabilized polycarbonate material won't yellow. With an adjustable cover, this feeder helps protect the seed from weather. It works great for feeding seeds, mealworms, suet pellets and fruit. ■



▲ *Droll Yankees platform feeder with adjustable cover*

**Have an idea for a future issue of *Birds-Eye View*?** Photos and articles may be submitted by email to [info@wildbirdstore.net](mailto:info@wildbirdstore.net).  
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